

Message Text

SECRET

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41

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W

----- 101717

O 111510Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1062

S E C R E T BEIRUT 6116

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, ASEC, US, LE

SUBJECT: PLANNING FOR POSSIBLE EVACUATION

REF: (A) STATE 162821, (B) STATE 171480, (C) USDAO BEIRUT 557 JULY 2

(DTG 021647Z JUL 76)

1. REGRET THAT YOU DID NOT RPT NOT RECEIVE DIRECT REPLY TO STATE 162821. WE HAD MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THAT DAO BEIRUT'S 557 JULY 2, DTG 021647Z JUL 76, WHICH WENT TO CINCUSNAVEUR FOR ACTION (INFO DEPT) HAD TAKEN CARE OF MATTER.

2. POSSIBLE NUMBER OF EVACUEES. AT PRESENT WE ESTIMATE THE MAXIMUM POTENTIAL EVACUEES HERE AS 4,615 BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

A) WEST BEIRUT - 3,992, BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

42 USG;

950 PRIVATE AMERICANS PLUS THEIR DEPENDENTS;

2,500 THIRD COUNTRY;

500 OTHER.

B) JOUNIE - 450 AMCITS AND ALIEN DEPENDENTS

C) TRIPOLI - 4 " " " "

D) SIDON - 57 AMCITS AND ALIEN DEPENDENTS

E) BEKAA - 66 " " " "

HOWEVER, BASED ON OUR OBSERVATIONS IN FORMING LAST TWO ROAD CONVOYS, THE ABOVE FIGURES REPRESENT ESSENTIALLY THE HARD CORE AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT VERY MANY OF THIS GROUP WILL ACTUALLY DEPART

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LEBANON. SHOULD THE EMBASSY CLOSE DOWN MORE WOULD ELECT TO

EVACUATE. IT IS EXCEEDINGLY HARD TO MAKE AN ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER, HOWEVER. THOSE IN JOUNIE, TRIPOLI AND BEKAA WOULD IN ANY CASE PRESUMABLY BE UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN EVACUATION. OF THE REMAINDER, MAYBE 1,000 AT MOST WOULD ELECT TO LEAVE WITH US, SINCE A GREAT MAJORITY ARE INTEGRATED. EVEN THIS SEEMS HIGH.

3. REGARDING MEANS OF EVACUATION, ROAD CONVOY IS POSSIBLE NOW, BUT IF SECURITY SITUATION DETERIORATES SUBSTANTIALY, REQUIRING US TO EVACUATE REST OF EMBASSY, THIS AVENUE OF ESCAPE CAN PROBABLY NOT RPT NOT BE COUNTED ON. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN IF AIRPORT IS OPEN (WHICH WOULD BE UNLIKELY), IT WOULD PROBABLY BE TOO RISKY TO GET THERE. ON OTHER HAND, WERE IT POSSIBLE AND IN VIEW OF PROBABLY CONTINUED CLOSURE OF AIRPORT, ROAD CONVOYS TO DAMASCUS--WHICH WE HAVE BEEN USING SUCCESSFULLY FOR PAST TWO WEEKS--WOULD BE EASIEST AND BEST MEANS OF EVACUATING. BUT WE ARE FORCED TO CONCLUDE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WILL REQUIRE EVACUATION--OTHER THAN SIMPLY RUNNING OUT OF FUEL TOOPERATE EMBASSY GENERATOR--ARE EITHER SYRIAN SHELLING OF BEIRUT AND/OR PLO BACKLASH AGAINST AMERICANS. IF THIS HAPPENS, ONLY SAFE AND RAPID WAY TO GET OUT IS VIA FLUID DRIVE. WE WOULD HOPE TO BE ABLE TO ANTICIPATE THE WORST, SO THAT HELICOPTER OR SEA EVACUATION COULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN PERMISSIVE ENVIRONMENT. IF WE HAVE TO LEAVE BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUEL, AND ABOVE POLITICAL SCENARI O HAS NOT OCCURRED, WE WOULD DEPART BY ROAD CONVOY.

4. WE CAN CONCEIVE OF NO LIKELY UPCOMING SITUATION WHERE IT WOULD BE BETTER TO STAY PUT RATHER THAN EVACUATE. WE ARE IN THAT STAGE NOW.
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